Malnutrition Among Children in SAARC Region

2286. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in the SAARC region the rate of malnutrition amongst children is as high as 47 per cent;

(b) whether the prevalence of low weight at birth is as high as 33 per cent;

(c) whether the views expressed by experts are that the long term cost of investing in children health care is cheaper than not investing in them; and

(d) if so, Government's views on this?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) Undernutrition/Malnutrition among children is an important public health problem in the country. To address the problem of undernutrition/ malnutrition, the Government of India adopted the National Nutrition Policy in 1993 which advocated a multi-sectoral approach for controlling the problem of malnutrition and improving nutrition of the people. The National Nutrition Policy contains both short term/direct interventions and long-term/indirect interventions which are under implementation. A National Plan of Action on Nutrition was also developed to serve as a framework for translating the instruments of National Nutrition Policy which identified the role of 14 Departments/Ministries of the Government towards nutrition promotion.

Pulse Polio Campaign

2287. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state the extent of polio eradication strategy achieved, so far, with the Pulse Polio Campaign started in 1955?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): The Pulse Polio Immunization programme was launched in 1995. The number of polio cases has been declining steadily over the years. As against 3265 cases in 1995, 1934 in 1998,1126 in 1999, 265 in 2000, only 32 cases have been reported during the first seven months of 2001.